PEAR-JUICE PIZZAZZ
HOLIDAY PUNCH RECIPES {page 19}

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INVESTIGATED
POLICE LOOKING INTO LILO REHAB INCIDENT DISH {page 16}

VANCOUVER metro®
Wednesday, December 22, 2010
www.metronews.ca
News worth sharing.

Lantern. Fest

▶ The Carnival band dancers entertain crowds on Granville Island during the 17th annual Winter Solstice Lantern Festival last night.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

Celebrating the solstice

Stuff research in your stocking

Paul Sullivan on the grinches who steal Christmas {page 10}

Drug, gun charges for cop

Suspended Mountie accused of trafficking marijuana {page 3}

B.C. tops in cancer survival

Study compares outcomes of breast, ovarian, colorectal and lung cancers Findings published yesterday in prestigious medical journal The Lancet

British Columbia took top spot in an international study comparing cancer outcomes in six countries with similar wealth and health-care systems, according to findings announced in Vancouver yesterday.

The international study compared data from 12 regions in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

David Levy, president of the B.C. Cancer Agency, said the findings reflect how well the agency is doing.

"It's imperative we continue to compare our cancer outcomes (because) we must always strive to improve," he said.

Levy credited the survival rates to our high access to drug treatment, and the province's collaborative approach to care.

Mary McNeil, MLA for Vancouver-False Creek and former CEO of the B.C. Cancer Agency, said the findings prove the agency is a model for others, but added we still have a long way to go to before we find a cure for the disease.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

▶ Liberal MLA Mary McNeil, ex-CEO of the B.C. Cancer Agency, at the B.C. Cancer Research Centre in Vancouver yesterday.

Breast cancer

▶ The B.C. five-year survival rate for breast cancer is the highest of all the jurisdictions in the study, at 89.1 per cent.

KRISTEN THOMPSON

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Councillors to get raise in 2011

The dawn of the new year will also herald a new era of pay raises for members of Vancouver's city council.

This year's adjustment will hike the annual pay of councillors 3.1 per cent, to nearly $64,000, while the salary of Mayor Gregor Robertson will increase at the same rate, to reach $144,000.

Vancouver councillors remain far from the best-paid employees at city hall, however, and are actually drawing much lower salaries than those of senior staff — many of whom are paid at least twice as much as the mayor himself. Several high-ranking city officials, including the city manager, deputy city manager, and city solicitor, all bring in more than $200,000 a year.

Coun. Suzanne Anton said that high pay for bureaucrats is necessary to attract and retain talent but that the same is true for politicians.

J.J. MCCULLOUGH

Explosion on movie set injures six people

A propane explosion on the set of a movie starring Dolph Lundgren sent six people to hospital, including actors wearing make-up and medieval costumes.

The blast happened yesterday afternoon in Golden Ears Provincial Park, east of Vancouver, on the set of In the Name of the King 2.

Six people suffered minor burns and one had a broken leg, said Chief Dane Spence of the Maple Ridge Fire Department.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Orcas. Charity

▶ An orca named Springer, front, and her companion, Spray, swim in the waters north of Vancouver Island this summer.

VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

Adoption program saves the whales

The Vancouver Aquarium yesterday released photos of Springer, a young orca who was discovered eight years ago off Seattle's waterfront. The two-year-old whale was orphaned and starving. At the time, the story of her capture and rehabilitation made international headlines. Funds to help save the now-10-year-old orca were donated through the Vancouver Aquarium's Killer Whale Adoption Program. Visit killerwhale.org for more info.

Mountie faces 15 charges

Appeared in Surrey provincial court to face charges, including trafficking marijuana ◗ Clarke suspended from active duty in October ◗ Remains on suspension, pending outcome of trial

J.J. MCCULLOUGH
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

A suspended Surrey Mountie is facing more than a dozen charges relating to drug trafficking, gun possession and identity theft, RCMP officials announced yesterday.

Const. David Clarke was removed from active service in early October, following allegations of involvement with drugs and illegal firearms, but was never formally charged until now.

Of the 15 counts currently being brought against him, 13 are gun-related, and involve unauthorized ownership of six distinct weapons, including two semiautomatic rifles, two handguns and a Mossberg shotgun, as well as ammunition.

The remaining two charges accuse Clarke of both possessing and trafficking marijuana, and of possessing stolen property, including the identification documents of "several persons."

Clarke was indicted yesterday in provincial court in Surrey.

He is expected to return to court in the new year.

Arsenal

Const. David Clarke is accused of possessing these firearms without a licence:

- EN FAL semiautomatic rifle
- Mohawk semiautomatic rifle
- Colt semiautomatic handgun
- Glock 9mm handgun
- Mossberg shotgun

1 news

Part Seinfeld, part Chaplin, Kandahar's comedy king laughs in misery's face. Scan code for story.

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2 Use the ScanLife application on your smartphone to scan 2D barcodes in Metro

3 The codes will direct your mobile browser to relevant content at m.metronews.ca

On the web at metronews.ca

Why leaks, Wiki and otherwise, are critical for a functioning democracy. More at metronews.ca/spindoctor

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News in brief

Unwanted gator taken from home to zoo

LANGLEY. A B.C. reptile expert helped relocate a 15-year-old alligator from a Langley home after the animal's owner decided to move to Thailand without his pet.

The 300-pound reptile was taken to the Greater Vancouver Zoo.

KRISTEN THOMPSON

Cops issue warning over pickpockets

ROBBERIES. Police are recommending that people be vigilant and wary of pickpockets after three women were robbed recently in Vancouver.

There have been 54 reported purse snatchings in 2010, compared to 121 in 2009.

KIMIYA SHOKOOHI

Railroads donate

CHARITY. Two of Canada's railway corporations will give $6,000 to help out a local long-term residence shelter for addicted and mentally ill adults.

Canadian National and West Coast Rail announced the joint donation yesterday, which will go to the Portland Hotel Society.

J.J. MCCULLOUGH

Market passes milestone

CHRISTMAS. Continuing to draw large crowds nearly a month after its Nov. 28 opening, Vancouver's German-themed Christmas market at Queen Elizabeth Theatre celebrated its 100,000th visitor yesterday.

The fair will remain open until Christmas Eve.

J.J. MCCULLOUGH

For news visit metronews.ca

TransLink touts gift of a low-car diet

Car sharing at SeaBus and SkyTrain stations from $3 an hour

KIMIYA SHOKOOHI
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Caring for the environment doesn't have to mean chucking the car keys.

TransLink is urging Vancouverites to make use of car-sharing vehicles near SeaBus and SkyTrain stations in Metro Vancouver.

"We're encouraging people to go on a low-car diet," said Frankie Kirby, program manager for TransLink's Travel Smart program.

TransLink is advertising car sharing on billboards near SkyTrain stations.

Its car-sharing partners, Zipcar and Car Co-op, give commuters the freedom of a vehicle without the maintenance costs of owning a car, Kirby said.

"There are a lot of people who live in urban zones and who don't have a vehicle," said Mark Pribula, general manager of Zipcar. "(Car sharing) creates freedom."

Vancouverites must register with the company and receive an electronic fob to get into the cars, which are ready to drive and are parked in pre-designated locations around town.

A study found that each car-share vehicle removes 15 to 20 cars from the streets.

"That's really powerful," Pribula said, "and that's why car sharing is important for the environment."

KIMIYA SHOKOOHI/FOR METRO

▶ A man uses a Zipcar yesterday at Yaletown station.

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FACEBOOK

Concern over teen drinking challenge

At the same time of year when the bubbly is overflowing, West Vancouver Police have asked Facebook to cork a page encouraging binge drinking among teens.

Police say the page had posted drinking challenges urging youth to guzzle large quantities of booze in a very short time, attempt to avoid vomitting and then put videos of those acts online.

Officers contacted about 10 local students who were participating on the global site after a concerned adult from the area notified them of its existence last week.

Const. Lisa Schmidtke says police talked with the teens and their parents about the potential dangers of excessive drinking.

The department also reported the page to Facebook, which altered the site to eliminate concerns, though Schmidtke says she'd ultimately like the page to be shut down altogether.

Schmidtke says the site now discourages underage drinking.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Beauty powers better first impressions: Study

Participants rated partners on physical attractiveness, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism

KRISTEN THOMPSON
@METRONEWS.CA

The University of B.C. has uncovered yet another reason why it's better to be beautiful.

According to a UBC study published in the December edition of Psychological Science, we identify the personality traits of people we deem beautiful more accurately than those we find average or ugly.

Previous research has shown that individuals tend to find attractive people more intelligent, friendly and competent than others.

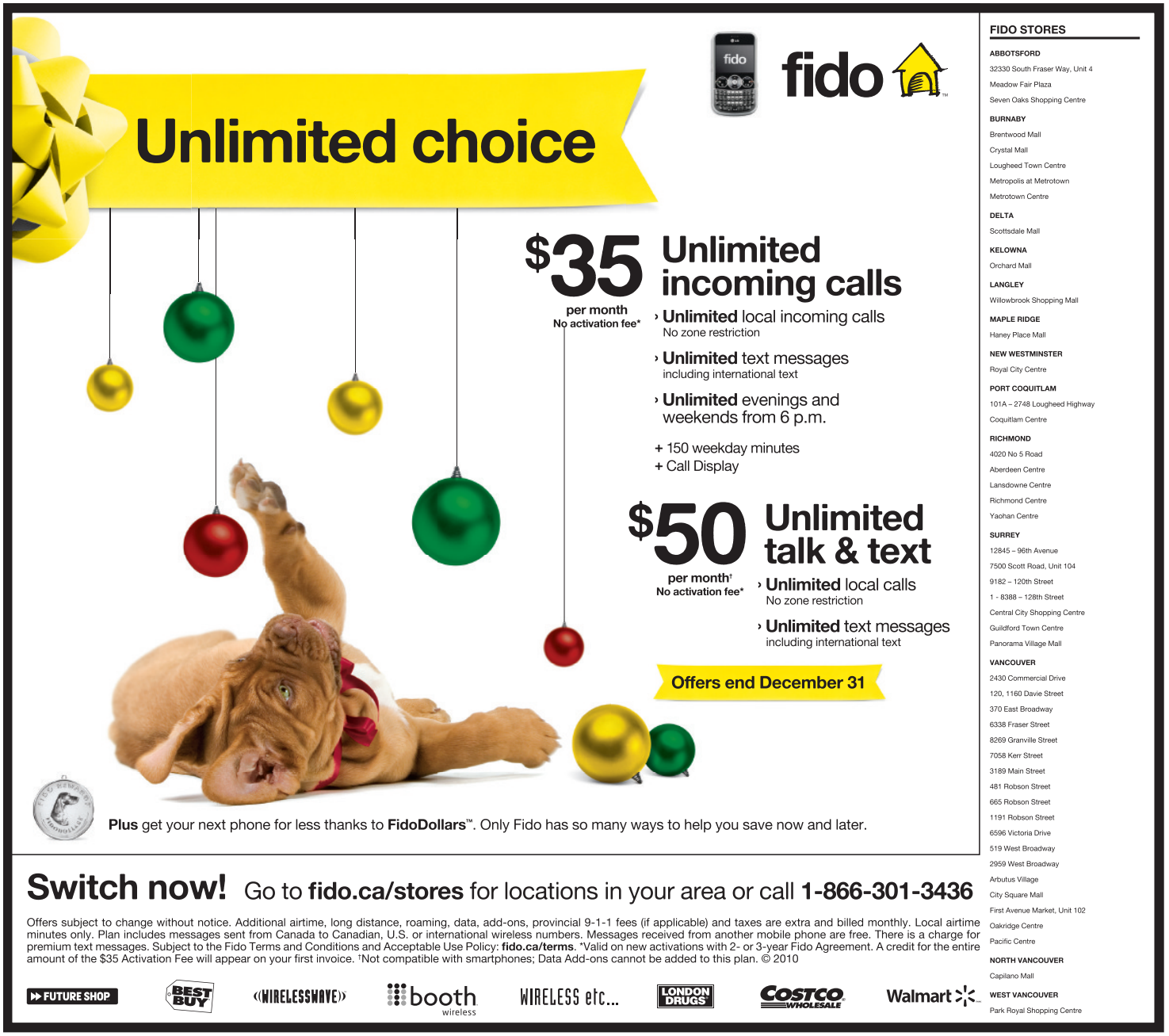
Jeremy Biesanz, a professor at UBC's department of psychology and co-author of the study, said there was also a clear positive bias toward beautiful people.

JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES

"If people think Jane is beautiful, and she is very organized and somewhat generous, people will see her as more organized and generous than she actually is," said Biesanz.

He said people are motivated to pay closer attention to beautiful people because of curiosity, romantic interest or desire for friendship.

"Not only do we judge books by their covers, we read the ones with beautiful covers much closer than others," Biesanz said.



Celebrate the holidays at Robson Square

Enjoy free skating and live music

This winter, renew a classic Vancouver tradition and enjoy some old-fashioned fun.

Robson Square's outdoor skating rink is open, so celebrate winter in style with free skating, hot chocolate and live entertainment in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

It's a magical place to enjoy the holidays with your friends, family and loved ones.

The skating rink is open:

- Sunday to Thursday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Friday and Saturday: 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Holidays:

- December 24, 2010: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- December 25, 2010: Noon to 5 p.m.

Skate and helmet rentals, skate sharpening and a concession stand are available at the rink.

For more information, visit *www.yougottabehere.com*. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

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Condom use still wrong: Vatican

Statement says comments were misunderstood Pope still opposes condoms for contraception

The Vatican yesterday sought to clarify the Pope's controversial comments about condoms and HIV, saying he by no means suggested condom use could be condoned as a means of avoiding pregnancy.

The Vatican's moral watchdog, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a statement saying some commentators had misrepresented the pope's remarks in a book-length interview released last month entitled Light of the World.

The Vatican statement stressed that Benedict was not talking about sex between husband and wife or condom use as a form of contraception.

His comments in Light of the World had signalled to many a shift in the Pope's thinking.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Comments

Reports of the Pope's comments had been greeted with relief among AIDS activists working on the front lines in Africa.

- Benedict said that condom use in some cases, such as for male prostitutes, could be a first step toward a more moral and responsible human sexuality.

Europe. Chaos

▶ Hundreds of people queue outside St. Pancras Station in London for the Eurostar train to France yesterday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/LEWIS WHYLD

Stranded in London

Major delays and cancellations persisted at European airports, leaving thousands stranded across Europe as Christmas approaches. Heathrow Airport told infuriated passengers it won't restore full service until tomorrow.

Teens charged in alleged sex assault

Two 15-year-old boys are facing charges after a young woman was allegedly raped while she was passed out at a Calgary light-rail transit station.

Police say the assault happened early Sunday morning after train service had ended for the day.

Staff Sgt. Dave Louie, a police spokesman, says two boys were at the station platform in the city's southwest when they came across the woman.

Louie says one of them acted as a lookout while the second suspect allegedly attacked the female.

The assault was not caught on a surveillance system that monitors LRT stations 24 hours a day, but a struggle between the woman and one of the suspects was.

The boys have been remanded in custody until their next court appearance.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Assange complains about leak

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is complaining that someone leaked a Swedish police report on his alleged sexual offences.

"The leak of the police report ... was clearly designed to undermine my bail application. It was timed to come up on the desk of the judge that morning," Assange said in an interview.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wanted

Swedish officials want to question Assange about allegations stemming from encounters with two women in Sweden. They accused him of rape, molestation and unlawful coercion. Assange has not been charged.

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STUFF THIS RESEARCH IN A STOCKING

Just sayin'

PAUL SULLIVAN

'Tis a few days before Christmas and the Grinch is on the prowl.

Turns out the Grinch is a team at Simon Fraser University that has published the following anti-Christmas research: "Identity moderates the effects of Christmas displays on mood, self-esteem, and inclusion."

According to the professors and their grad student Grinch accomplices, their research shows that "the pervasive presence of Christmas displays in December makes people who do not celebrate Christmas feel like they don't belong, and it harms their emotional well-being."

For those of us struggling to breathe under a seasonal avalanche of Bing Crosby, this is nothing new, but the closer you look at the actual experiment, the more you have to ask: Don't these guys have anything better to do?

Here's what they did — they put one group of students in a lab decorated with a 12-inch Christmas tree and another group in a lab with no tree. Then they asked them how they felt.

Subjects didn't know they were in a study on the psychological effects of Christmas trees, but were asked to fill out a questionnaire about their mood.

Moods varied depending on the presence of the tree and the background of the respondents. In the presence of the tree, Sikh and Buddhist respondents felt less sure about themselves and felt excluded from the university. Christian students reported a more positive mood.

Putting aside questions about the research (maybe 12-inch plastic trees are culturally depressing. Maybe Sikh and Buddhist students require much bigger trees to feel good?), this just encourages the brand of self-righteousness that blights the yuletide season annually.

Some killjoy kicks Christmas out of the mall in case someone might feel excluded.

And now they've got research to back them up. "Studies show …" they'll proclaim, ignoring the fact it's one study and one tree.

I wonder what would happen if the team put its subjects through the Halloween test. Or the Thanksgiving test.

At some level, they're all religious festivals, but they are also festivals.

I'm in favour of festivals. Thanks to multiculturalism, we keep adding them to the calendar: Hanukkah; Kwanzaa; Diwali; Narooz. If we keep this up, we can have a parade every day of the year. And how good is that?

The point is to use festivals to include people, not exclude them. We all believe different things, but if there's one belief that unites us all, it's simply this: Festivals are fun.

So, without prejudice, I offer the following greeting: Merry Christmas! (And happy holidays to everyone, even professors).

Read more of Paul Sullivan's columns at metronews.ca/justsaying

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Your Christmas forecast

Worth mentioning

Canadians dreaming of a white Christmas will likely get their wish, unless they live in the Maritimes or British Columbia.

Environment Canada senior climatologist David Phillips says much of the country will be wrapped in a white blanket on Christmas morning.

It could be the whitest Christmas ever in London and Sarnia, Ont.

London already has 48 centimetres while the Sarnia area was socked with 30-40 centimetres last week that stranded hundreds of motorists on Highway 402.

With nine centimetres on the ground and more on the way, Ottawa and Montreal are guaranteed a white Christmas.

Snow on the ground and below normal temperatures mean the Prairies already have their white Christmas in the bag, said Phillips.

There's just no chance for a white Christmas in Fredericton, Moncton, Halifax, Sydney, Charlottetown, St. John's, and Corner Brook, N.L., said Phillips.

Vancouver won't have a white Christmas, but there's only been an 11 per cent chance over 55 years that the city has one anyway, said Phillips. In Victoria and along the B.C. coast, there's little chance, he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

West Coast out of luck

MIKE HEWITT/GETTY IMAGES

Is a white Christmas important to you?

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Metro Minute with Aunt Leah's trees

If you are looking for a last-minute Christmas tree, catch the final day of Aunt Leah's life skills society Christmas tree sale.

The organization provides supportive housing, job training and teaches life-management skills to prevent children in foster care from becoming homeless. It also helps mothers in poverty from losing custody of their children. Trees prices depend on types and begin at $5 per foot. They also sell tree stands and lights. The sale runs at St. Stephens United Church (7025 Granville St.) from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and All Saints Anglican Church (7405 Royal Oak Av.) from 1-9 p.m. Visit auntleahs.org for more.

AYAKA KAWAI

ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Today is the final day for Aunt Leah's life skills society Christmas tree sale.

Pace of inflation moderates

November reversed trend of rising inflation established since July

The pace of inflation in Canada eased to an annual rate of two per cent last month as the prices of most consumer goods either saw a moderation in growth or outright declines from last year.

After a surprising spurt in October to an annualized rate of 2.4 per cent, inflation as measured by the consumer price index now appears headed back to moderate levels.

And November's figures from Statistics Canada also likely eliminated whatever concern Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney might have had that keeping interest rates at such historic lows much longer would trigger a sharp rise in prices. THE CANADIAN PRESS

November rates

(previous month in brackets)

- Newfoundland and Labrador **2.2** (3.0)
- Prince Edward Island **1.2** (2.3)
- Nova Scotia **2.2** (2.9)
- New Brunswick **1.4** (1.8)
- Quebec **1.1** (1.4)
- Ontario **3.0** (3.4)
- Manitoba **1.1** (1.2)
- Saskatchewan **2.0** (2.1)
- Alberta **0.1** (1.2)
- British Columbia **2.2** (2.4)

Skin. A-ma-rink

▶ Victoria Eisermann, a campaigner from PETA, is chased by Ice rink security as she demonstrates as a nearly naked fox in London, yesterday.

KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP PHOTO

PETA fox bares skin

Demonstrators took to the ice rink to highlight their campaign against wearing animal skins. PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) argues that the fur trade business causes unnecessary suffering to animals.

Monitoring of oilsands slammed

A high-level advisory panel has told Ottawa and Alberta to put politics aside and set up a world-class environmental monitoring system for the Alberta oilsands.

But within hours of the release of the panel's report urging the two governments to iron out their jurisdictional issues, there were already signs of federal-provincial friction.

In Ottawa, federal Environment Minister John Baird said he would start implementing the panel's recommendations immediately. But in Edmonton, Premier Ed Stelmach suggested Alberta should take the lead. Indeed, his provincial environment minister launched a separate revamping of the monitoring system just this week. THE CANADIAN PRESS

PAWEL DWULIT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"There is clearly a lack of leadership and co-ordination"

ELIZABETH DOWDESWELL, OIL SANDS ADVISORY PANEL CHAIR

Market moment

DOLLAR	Natural gas 1,000 cu ft	OIL	TSX
– 0.11¢ (98.28¢ US)	$4.059 (– 17.8¢) Gold contracts $1,388.80 (+ $2.70)	+ 45¢ US ($89.82 US)	+ 171.87 (13,365.15)

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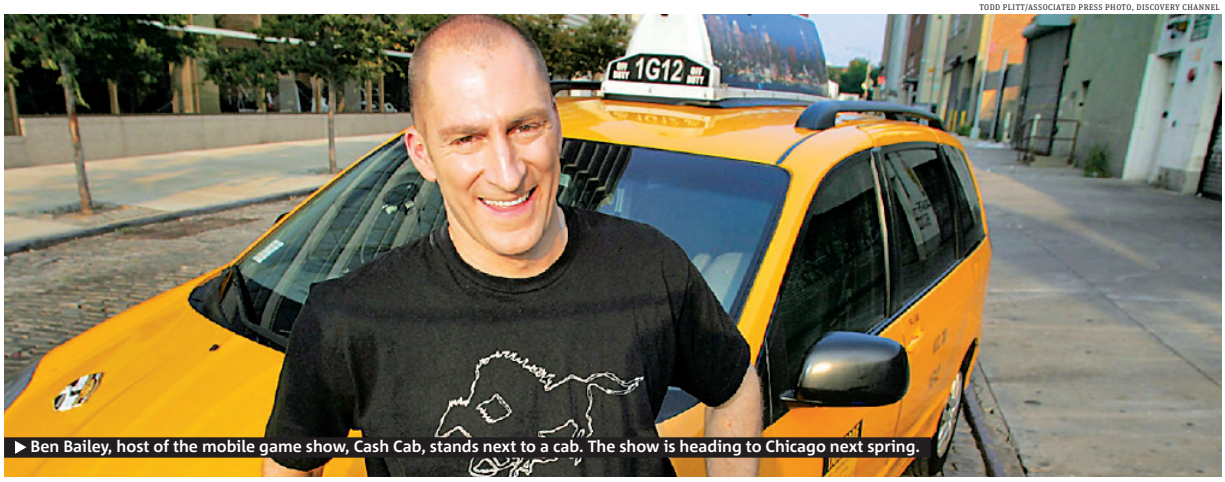
2 scene

TODD PLITT/ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO, DISCOVERY CHANNEL



▶ Ben Bailey, host of the mobile game show, Cash Cab, stands next to a cab. The show is heading to Chicago next spring.

Cash Cab drives on to streets of Chicago

A game show on four wheels that is able to compete creatively with longtime studio favourites Jeopardy! and Wheel of Fortune

The Discovery Network show that turns a New York City cab ride into an instant game show is launching a spinoff version based in Chicago next spring. Comic Beth Melewski, a Second City cast member, will be behind the wheel.

The expansion comes after a triumphant year for Cash Cab. The series, itself a remake of a British TV's similar game based in London, won its second Daytime Emmy for best game show. Ben Bailey won his first Emmy as best host.

"It's everything that people thought it would be. It's a validation and credit for hard work."
BEN BAILEY, CASH CAB

The idea for the Chicago version came when Bailey did a handful of tapings in Las Vegas, some that included entertainers such as Carrot Top playing for charity, and Discovery recognized how a new city with new people and new sites could give Cash Cab an entirely different feel, said Clark Bunting, Discovery's CEO.

Bunting is from Michigan, and he wanted to get the Midwest involved. Chicago, a city similar to New York with many cabs, seemed like it could work in a way that Los Angeles, for example, couldn't since there's relatively little cab use.

Melewski had the combination of smarts and knowledge of her city to work well in the cab, he said.

"Beth feels real-deal Chicago," he said. "You've got to have, for these shows at least, a feel for the city." **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

How it works

Contestants are asked a series of trivia questions that get increasingly harder as the ride goes on

- **Prize** They can win $25, $50 and $100 US in increments.
- **Going double** Baily often prompts players to go double-or-nothing, and one rider walked out with $6,200.
- **Limitations** Game ends when a player reaches the destination or gets three answers wrong.

Scene in brief

30 Rock star Tracy Morgan is recovering from a kidney transplant. A statement released Monday by Morgan's publicist says Morgan is doing well and taking much-needed time to recover from the surgery earlier this month. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Hustling Miami video director earns praise

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THIS PAGE COVERS MOVIE START TIMES FROM WED., DEC. 22 TO THURS., DEC. 23. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

VANCOUVER

DUNBAR THEATRE
4555 Dunbar Street, 604-222-2991

True Grit (14A) Wed-Thu 1:30-4-7-9:35

FIFTH AVENUE CINEMAS
2110 Burrard Street, 604-734-7469

True Grit (14A) Wed-Thu 1:10-4-7-9:20

OAKRIDGE
650 West 41st Ave., 604-263-1944

Little Fockers (PG) DTS Digital, No Passes Wed-Thu 12:30-3:30-6:45-9:30

SCOTIABANK THEATRE VANCOUVER
900 Burrard St., 604-630-1407

True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:50-3:50-7:10-10

NORTH SHORE

ESPLANADE 6
200 West Esplanade, 604-983-2762

True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1-4:10-7-9:40

PARK & TILFORD
333 Brooksbank Ave., 604-985-3911

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:30-3:20-6:30-9:40

RICHMOND

RICHMOND CENTRE 6
6551 #3 Road, 604-273-7173

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 3:55-7:10-9:35
True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 3:50-7:20-10

SILVERCITY RIVERPORT
14211 Entertainment Way, 604-272-7280

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 11-11:30-1:40-2:15-4:30-5-7:15-7:45-10:15-10:45
True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:15-4:20-7:40-10:45

BURNABY

DOLPHIN CINEMAS
4555 E. Hastings St., 604-293-0332

Little Fockers (PG) Wed-Thu 12:30-2:35-4:45-6:50-9

SILVERCITY METROPOLIS
4700 Kingsway Ave., 604-435-7474

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:05-3:15-6:50-9:45
True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:10-4-7:55

NEW WEST/ COQUITLAM

SILVERCITY COQUITLAM
170 Schoolhouse Street, 604-523-2911

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:40-1:20-3:40-4:20-6:45-7:15-9:50-10:10
True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:10-1:15-3:35-4:10-6:30-7:05-9:35-10:05

SURREY/WHITE ROCK/LANGLEY

STRAWBERRY HILL GRANDE
12161-72nd Ave, Surrey, 604-501-9400

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:30-3:15-6:30-9:15
True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:15-4:15-8-10:45

STUDIO 12 GUILDFORD
15051-101st Ave, Surrey, 604-581-1176

Little Fockers (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 12:45-4:10-6:50-9:30
True Grit (14A) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 12:35-4:20-7:25-10:15

RIALTO
1732-152nd Street, White Rock, 604-541-9527, criterontheatres.com

True Grit (14A) Wed-Thu 2-7-9:10

COLOSSUS LANGLEY
20090-91A Ave, Langley, 604-513-8747

Little Fockers (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:35-1:25-3:35-4:20-7:05-7:40-9:45-10:30
True Grit (14A) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:40-3:55-7:15-10:20

Movie review See it twice ⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ | See it now ⊕⊕⊕⊕ | Worth watching ⊕⊕⊕ | Yawn ⊕⊕ | Don't bother ⊕

Coens do justice to True Grit

True Grit
Genre: Western
Directors: Ethan Coen, Joel Coen
Stars: Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon and Hailee Steinfeld
⊕⊕⊕⊕½

Perhaps only artists as visionary and celebrated as The Coen Brothers would dare remake a film as beloved as True Grit and not be met with a tsunami of bile. The original 1969 picture (itself just re-released on Blu ray) starred John Wayne in the role that won him a much belated Oscar and was perhaps the last gasp of the classic, Ford/Hawks steeped mythic American western before the ultra-violent influence of the Italian "spaghetti western" consumed the genre.

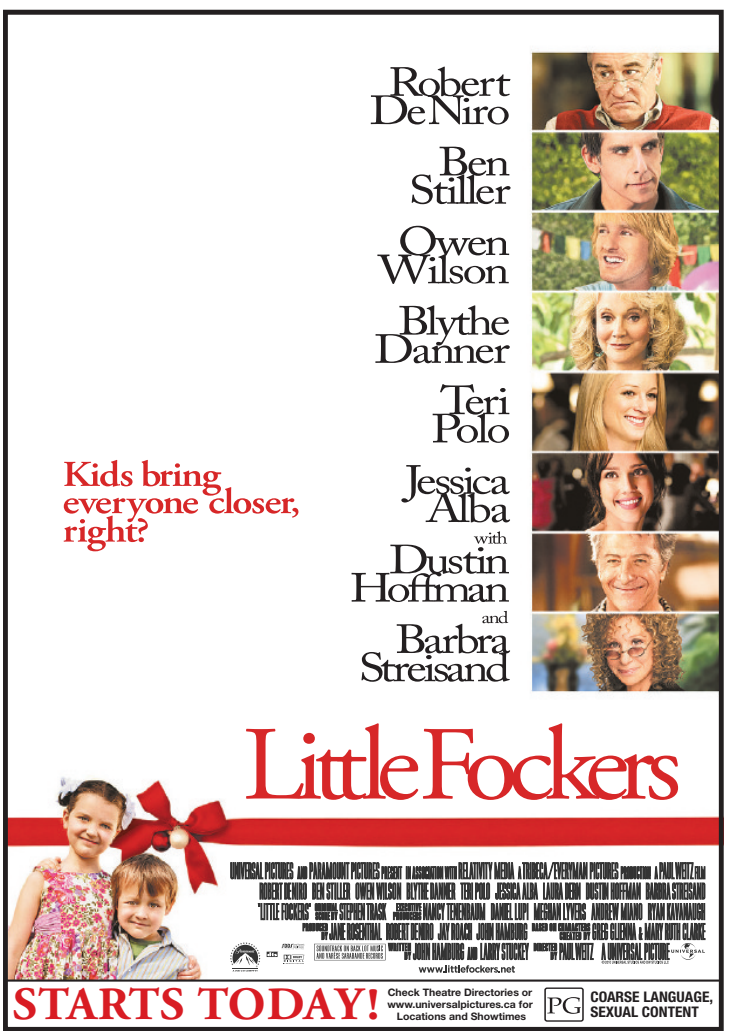
Wisely, the Coen's have decided not to reproduce or "reinvent" it but rather go back to the source on which it was based, Charles Portis's novel. The resulting picture is nothing short of a joy to behold.

This time, instead of The Duke we have Jeff Bridges at his craggy, curmudgeonly best as lone wolf Marshall Rueben "Rooster" Cogburn, who when he's not defending his latest righteous kill in a court of law, sleeps his booze soaked self away in a cot behind a Chinese restaurant.

Into his sagebrush dusted life comes 14 year old Mattie Ross (Hailee Steinfeld), who secures Cogburn to hunt the villain that killed her father and bring 'em back alive. Also adhered to their adventure is the preening, over-his-head Ranger LeBoef (Matt Damon) who also wants to get his mitts on the same murderer so he can hang him for his crimes in Texas.

That's pretty much the story but narrative contrivance isn't what makes True Grit such a heart swelling, eye filling delight. It's a mixture of spot-on, giddy performances both lead and supporting; the delicate, lonely but never oppressive cinematography by Roger Deakins; Carter Burwell's aching and melancholy score that uses the hymn Leaning on the Everlasting Arms and most importantly, it's The Coen's ace direction, milking mirth and rugged poetry out of every second of screen time. A gentle, rambling treasure of a film.

CHRIS ALEXANDER



Little fun from Little Fockers

Little Fockers
Genre: Comedy
Director: Paul Weitz
Stars: Ben Stiller, Robert De Niro, Owen Wilson

A once mildly amusing comedy is now an insufferable franchise brought to new lows with Little Fockers. Not since It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World have so many stars combined forces to create easily the worst film of their careers.

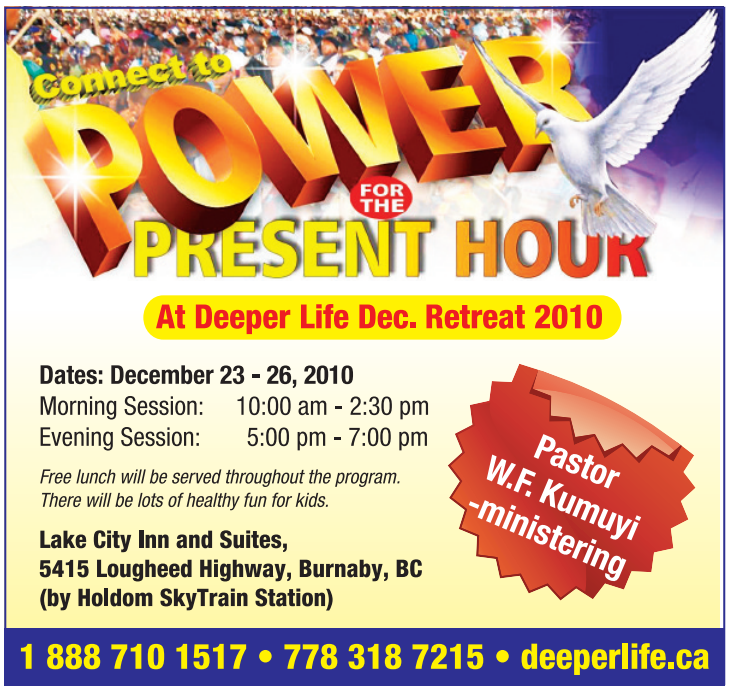
Once again an anxious Ben Stiller is put at odds his former CIA father in-law Robert De Niro, who now hopes that Stiller can take over the family patriarchal reigns as The Godfocker, but is concerned that he's having an affair with a cute little drug rep named Andi Garcia (Jessica Alba). Those two terrible puns represent the best jokes in the movie and are repeated ad nauseam to ensure that you won't find them funny by the end credits.

The Fockers (Barbara Streisand and Dustin Hoffman) pop up on the sidelines hosting a sex chat show and learning flamingo moves in Spain respectively, while Owen Wilson returns as a wealthy family friend with eyes for Stiller's wife.

All the subplots and characters kind of connect in a climax, but the hastily constructed screenplay is too haphazard to form anything resembling a narrative.

The only reason to buy a ticket for Little Fockers is to line the bank accounts of all of the celebrities involved in time for Christmas. Don't fall into the trap. This isn't a movie. It's a Focking disgrace.

PHIL BROWN



Lindsay under investigation

Lohan has been undergoing treatment at the Betty Ford Center and its facilities since September

Lindsay Lohan is under investigation for an alleged misdemeanour battery against a female staffer at a rehab facility where the actress is receiving treatment, authorities said yesterday.

Riverside County sheriff's Deputy Herlinda Valenzuela said officers responded to a Betty Ford Center facility in Palm Desert on Dec. 12 shortly after 1 a.m. for an incident involving Lohan.

Valenzuela says a female staffer reported having a dispute with the Mean Girls star and that she wanted to pursue charges. No arrests were made and Valenzuela says detectives continue to look into the case.

Their results will be presented to Riverside County prosecutors, who will decide whether to file a criminal case, Valenzuela said.

Messages for Lohan's attorney were not returned. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

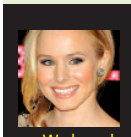
▶ Lindsay Lohan

Celebrity tweets

Chris Brown
i have enough self respect and decency to be proud of accomplishing this DV class. Boyz run from there mistakes. Men learn from them!!!

Steve Martin
REPORT FROM JURY DUTY: guy I thought was up for murder turns out to be defense attorney. I bet he murdered someone anyway.

Kirstie Alley
What do I want for Christmas you ask...I want Sanity and Wisdom..what do you want?



Kristen Bell
Dear Europe, please let us go. We have been very good this year and we are very homesick. Love, us

Are Miller and Law getting ready to get hitched?

Jude Law and Sienna Miller are reportedly so happy together that the couple are again talking marriage — and maybe as soon as within the next two weeks.

Miller's sister, Savannah Miller confirms to the Daily Mail that the couple have been talking marriage recently, while another source says they may even tie the knot over New Year's in a quiet ceremony.

The pair were previously engaged in 2005 before his cheating scandal forced her to call it off. METRO

News in brief

A very Cowell Christmas

GIFTS. British X-Factor judge Louis Walsh reveals that Simon Cowell got all the show's judges the same gift this year: a massive Botox gift certificate. "On the final he says, 'I've got a present for you three,' and he gives us envelopes," Walsh tells Sharon Osbourne during a TV interview. "I got home and opened [it] — it's [$4,500] worth of Botox." METRO

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KEVIN HUTCHINSON

▶ If you're looking for private beaches surrounded by gorgeous scenery, get away from the big resorts and try Mexico's smaller towns.

Small-town Mexico

Southeast of Acapulco, Huatulco is uncluttered and uncrowded This burgeoning resort town is close to no less than 36 untouched beaches

THE TRAVELLIN' CANADIAN

DARREN PARKMAN
TRAVEL@METRONEWS.CA

If you're tired of all those massive Mexican resort towns away from the popular bars and beaches, then small-town Huatulco might just be the perfect place for you.

This burgeoning West Coast resort area southeast of Acapulco is being built from the ground up by the Mexican government, with only about 15 luxury resort hotels surrounded by nine small bays.

That lack of clutter makes for no less than 36 stunning, private, untouched beaches, all around gorgeous scenery you can't find in many Mexican resort towns anymore. Of course, the surrounding natural habitat is all the more wild and untouched, making for some unique adventures.

Finding myself a few hours north of the coast, I felt like I was in the middle of the Amazon. During a gondola ride on secluded La Ventanilla Lagoon, the iguanas, turtles and tropical birds were plentiful, and so were 10-foot-plus crocodiles nudging by our little wooden vessel.

The area is also home to the Mexican turtle centre, where baby sea turtles are hatched and released regularly.

Another hidden treasure worth visiting lies tucked away in the mountains about two hours away from the coast.

The so-called Magic Water Falls are not only beautiful, but legend has it if you bathe in these remote mystical waters, they will magically erase wrinkles and instantly restore a youthful appearance.

If you want to beat the crowds to this obscure paradise, better do it soon. Over the next decade, there are plans to add 10 times the number of hotel rooms to accommodate two million tourists a year.

FLICKR: WYTZE

▶ Huatulco is surrounded by nine small bays.

What to do

Visit the Tipsy Blowfish. Located in quiet La Crucecita, this is one of the funkiest bars in all of Mexico. Take in great live music and easygoing small-town culture in a funky outdoor environment. Be sure to ask owner Texas Joe for some of the coldest beer in town.

Go on a Mexican Outback Safari. One of the newest attractions in Huatulco, this eco-adventure takes you to the heart of the tropical jungle and into far-removed villages. You'll cross mangroves and taste tropical fruit, and cap it off with some snorkelling in the remote fishing village of San Augustin.

Top travel reads for women

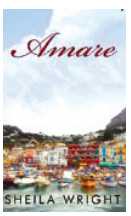
JOURNEY WOMAN

EVELYN HANNON
JOURNEYWOMAN.COM

For Christmas, Hanukkah or a special birthday I generally choose travel books as gifts for my best female friends.

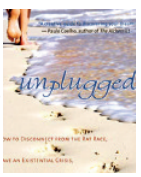
Whether they're an eco-adventuress or a gal that prefers armchair travel, I can always find something special.

Amare: A True Italian Love Story, by Sheila Wright
Amare is a magical memoir of an odyssey that began as a trip around the world and transformed into an unforgettable journey into the heart and soul of southern Italy.



Pampered in Paris: A Guide to the Best Spas, Salons and Beauty Boutiques, by Kim Horton Levesque
Where do chic and savvy Parisians go to pamper and indulge themselves? The culture of well-being and beauty thrives in Paris, not only at the institutes of internationally known product brands, but in the hands of individual practitioners who work in more unassuming settings.

Unplugged, by Nancy Whitney-Reiter
The author of this book survived the attacks of 9/11, left her job at a Fortune 500 company and embarked on a year of international travel and soul searching.



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3 life

Travel in brief

A new Disney resort will open in phases, starting in May 2012.

Officials said Disney's Art of Animation Resort will add about 800 permanent jobs to the Orlando economy. That's on top of the roughly 800 construction jobs the project will require.

The hotel will feature about 2,000 rooms, including 865 standard hotel rooms in Disney's "value" category. Another 1,120 will be suites.

Disney officials cite the demand for affordable suites as extended families often travel together to Disney World.

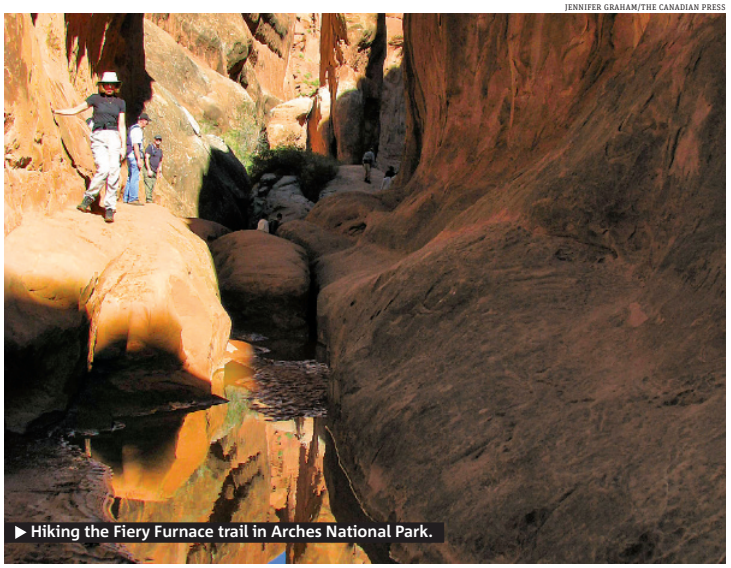
The first phase of the hotel will be a Finding Nemo-themed wing of suites. A wing of suites in the Lion King theme will follow. The final phase of conventional hotel rooms featuring the Little Mermaid theme is scheduled to open by December 2012.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Investors wanting to build replica of Noah's Ark get preliminary approval for tax breaks.

If watching James Franco in director Danny Boyle's latest flick 127 Hours has inspired you to embark on a hiking adventure of your own (albeit a safer one), head to Moab, Utah, where the movie was filmed Most trails in Arches National Park don't require a guide, but the scenic Fiery Furnace isn't for beginners

JENNIFER GRAHAM/THE CANADIAN PRESS



▶ Hiking the Fiery Furnace trail in Arches National Park.

JENNIFER GRAHAM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Skyline Arch in Arches National Park.

Utah's Fiery Furnace isn't a stroll through the park

Columns of red rock tower overhead as hikers, almost as nimble as Spider-Man, scramble over the sandstone and squeeze through narrow passages.

As the website for Arches National Park in Utah says, this is "not a casual stroll." It's the Fiery Furnace.

"It's not a hike that's for everyone," says Jim Blazik, information specialist at park headquarters in Moab, about eight kilometres from Arches.

"There are several places where it's very, very narrow. You don't have a base to walk on, where your footing is basically on rock on either side of you ... where you need both hands and arms to help you through certain places."

Despite such obstacles, the popular three-hour hike through the maze of the Fiery Furnace is considered only moderately strenuous. There are plenty of ups and downs but no big changes in elevation.

There are a few spots where hikers have to jump over cracks or move by holding themselves off the ground, pushing against the sandstone walls with their hands and feet. And some might need a hand across a couple of gaps.

JENNIFER GRAHAM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Red rock on the Fiery Furnace trail.

Hikers can go on their own but they need a permit and must first watch a short video covering safety and resource concerns.

The best way to see the Fiery Furnace is on one of the ranger-guided hikes, offered twice each day from March through October.

But most of the trails in Arches National Park don't require a guide.

The trail to Double Arch is an easy round-trip walk along a flat, sandy trail that leads to the base of two giant arch spans joined at one end.

Arches National Park has more than 2,000 natural sandstone arches but Blazik says it's about more than holes in the rock.

"It is a geological park but that's not all that's there by any stretch of the imagination," says Blazik.

"Sometimes just being knocked out of your socks just out of the beauty of the place is all people really care about."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

If you go...

- **The entrance** to the park is located 8 km north of Moab along Highway 191.
- **Commercial airlines** serve Grand Junction, Colo., and Salt Lake City. By car, these cities are two and four hours respectively from the park entrance.
- **The entrance fee** is $10 US per vehicle and is good for seven days.
- **The Fiery Furnace** ranger-guided hike is $10 for adults and $5 for children.
- **Make a reservation at** nps.gov/arch/index.htm

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Universal Travel

Bunches of punches for your holiday parties

THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Pear Tree Punch features a flamed orange garnish for a special twist.

Whether light and fizzy or dense and decadent, there's a punch recipe to complement every soirée

Following the adage that everything old is new again, the hot trend in party drinks this holiday is punch, served in, you guessed it, a punch bowl.

Various sources say punch was introduced to England from India in the early 17th century and then it spread to other countries.

Tanya Steel, editor-in-chief of Epicurious, says the resurgence of punch may be a harbinger of the times. "I think punches are a big beverage trend this holiday season because they are festive to look at and imbibe and it enables the host to stretch a little liquor a long way," she said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Stir things up

Here are some tips on preparing punch:

- Estimate the number of servings you will need. Generally punch is served in 125-ml (4-oz) round cups or glasses. Plan for three to four servings per guest.
- Use quality ingredients.
- If garnishing with fruit don't overload the bowl.
- Have as many of the ingredients chilled before beginning to make punch.
- Offer guests a non-alcoholic version of a punch that contains alcohol. The two bowls should be separated and clearly identified.

Pear Tree Punch

Ingredients :

- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) single malt Scotch
- 10 dashes orange bitters or regular bitters
- 750 ml (3 cups) pear juice
- Flamed orange zest, for garnish

Preparation:

1. In a pitcher, place all ingredients and stir to mix. Pour into punch bowl holding ice.
2. To flame an orange zest: Using a sharp knife, cut an oval tab of zest, about one by three inches.
3. With the skin pointing outward bend the oval toward the flame of a lighter over the drink. The flame should ignite the oils which will squirt from the zest. Add the flamed orange peel.

Nod to Nog

Ingredients :

- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) Canadian whisky
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) vanilla syrup (see step 1)
- 750 ml (3 cups) cream
- 8 egg whites
- Nutmeg, for garnish

Preparation:

1. To make vanilla syrup, add equal parts sugar and boiling water to a heatproof vessel, stir to dissolve and let cool. Add 2 to 3 drops of vanilla extract or 1/4 vanilla bean. Stir to mix.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Homemade vanilla syrup adds a new spin on a holiday favourite.

2. Combine ingredients with blender and add to a punch bowl. Keep chilled.
3. Garnish each serving with a pinch of nutmeg.

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BE CAUTIOUS WHEN CALLING THE MINISTRY

Don't confuse advice for info when speaking to a hotline representative Consult a laywer instead

Workplace Law

DANIEL LUBLIN

IS AN EMPLOYMENT LAWYER WITH WHITTEN & LUBLIN LLP. DAN@TORONTOEMPLOYMENTLAWYER.COM

One individual's experience, told here, provides an example of why you should be careful when you call the Ministry of Labour.

Following his termination, Scott Seltzer was given a termination package consisting of a three-week severance payment required by legislation and an offer for an additional payment in exchange for signing a release.

Instead of calling a lawyer, Seltzer called the B.C. Ministry of Labour for advice. Seltzer was told that in B.C. a worker "could not sign their legal rights away," which is technically correct but practically misleading. Each province has legislation that sets out minimum severance. Here, Seltzer was entitled to a minimum payment of three weeks' salary. However, since Seltzer was entitled to more than just the minimum, his employer asked him to sign a release for the additional payments — which is an agreement not to later sue. Although this was an issue that most employment lawyers would spot as a matter of course, the Ministry representative failed to clarify the distinction.

Relying on what he was told, Seltzer mistakenly thought he had nothing to lose by signing the release, believing he could take the extra money and then challenge his employer for more.

However, when he later made a human rights complaint, his claim was dismissed at a preliminary hearing because of the release he had signed. Why did this happen and how could it be avoided?

Most provincial employment ministries in Canada have hotlines for employees to call to obtain "information" about their rights. The problem is that this information is often construed as "advice," since advice is often inappropriately dispensed by the ministry representatives who answer the phone. And, since most people will believe, even if incorrectly, that they received advice from a government body, they are unlikely to later pay for a lawyer's time to obtain a second opinion.

This example is not an exception. The ministry representatives should explain only what the legislation says and how it was interpreted in the past. There is no mandate to provide recommendations, or worse, to provide advice.

ISTOCK IMAGES

▶ If a release form is folded up with your pink slip, sign it only after the proper persons have been consulted.

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News worth sharing.

ISTOCK IMAGES

▶ Once the eggnog has run out and the carols have been sung, it's time to ask yourself if you really want to go back to work.

Does my job bring me joy?

Experts emphasize that now is the best time of year to evaluate your career choices

DREW HINSHAW
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

As the stressful season of year-end deadlines and pre-Christmas chaos boils down to a cozy yuletide break, there's no more fitting a moment, career counselors say, to take a pause by the fireside and reflect on whether your daily work is meaningful.

"A rare few people have a real career plan, some people have a vague idea of what they should do, and most people have no formal goals," Executive Coach Jane Cranston says. "It's when they get into their mid-30s that they start asking 'where am I?'"

Better to start contemplating your life goals, she says, on December 30th than your 30th December.

That's true not just because the solstice has a magic for forcing normally rushed professionals to peer backwards at the years gone by – but because the winter months happen to be the prime time window to execute a career swap.

"Believe it or not, December, January and the first half of February are counter-intuitively, the best time to find a new job," Fearless Career Change author Marky Stein notes.

But they're also pretty good months to find the joy in your old job.

Start by using the holiday time, Stein recommends, to ask yourself what's right about your job, moving from basic questions – Does your boss respect you? Do your coworkers understand you? – towards more core considerations, like "Am I proud of what I do?" she suggests.

"Finally, there's the big existential question of 'Would I like to be remembered after my retirement or death as doing the position I am now doing and doing it well?" she offers. "People have to honestly face that question at one point or another."

A career counselor can help break down that daunting dilemma into a mere challenge.

"We help people set and attain goals," Cranston says. "The evidence is that most people attain more, faster when they have a coach."

Reaching high to score a dream

Ezra Frech won't let a disability stop him from becoming a sporting legend – just like his hero Pau Gasol

ELISABETH BRAW
METRO WORLD NEWS

Ezra Frech and Pau Gasol frequently get together to play basketball, and have plenty of fun doing it. That's somewhat surprising, given that Ezra is a four-year-old with a prosthetic leg, and Gasol is a basketball star — the NBA's best power-forward, to be precise.

But Gasol is a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and has made it his mission in life to help children in his adopted hometown of Los Angeles, where he plays for the Los Angeles Lakers. Sometimes he helps the Los Angeles Fire Department teach children about fire safety, sometimes he visits children in the hospital, and sometimes he plays basketball with Ezra.

The duo spoke with Metro — Ezra about his dreams for the future, and Gasol about his own aspirations he had as a child.

When I grow up:
Frech: I want to be a basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers. And after that, I want to be a coach. My prosthetic legs work great. In my spare time, I want to be a UNICEF Ambassador like Pau Gasol.
Gasol: It was a dream to become a basketball player, but I was also interested in other things, like science and music. If I hadn't become a basketball player, I would have become a scientist or doctor.

My family will consist of:
Frech: I will marry my beautiful girlfriend Sophia, who I met on the blue playground. We will have three boys and two girls and a golden retriever.
Gasol: I'm a family guy, so I always wanted to have several children, three or so, and a wife. The biggest privilege of my career is that I can serve as a role model for children and inspire them.

I will live in:
Frech: I will live four blocks from Staples Center where the Lakers play. And I will drive a car that turns into a helicopter.
Gasol: I didn't know any place outside of Spain. I wanted to grow up and become famous in my hometown.

My hobbies will be:
Frech: Surfing and playing soccer.
Gasol: I played the piano as a child and still do. I have a piano at home.

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4 sports

Canada answers Swedish challenge

Roy has 29 saves, Kassian, Schenn, Johansen net goals

4	1
CANADA	SWEDEN

The Canadian national junior team overcame a stiff challenge from a fast and aggressive Swedish squad, riding goals from Brayden Schenn, Zack Kassian and Ryan Johansen plus a stellar 29-save performance from goaltender Olivier Roy in a 4-1 exhibition win last night.

A patriotic and proud crowd at Toronto's Air Canada Centre went home happy but there was lots for head coach Dave Cameron and his staff to dissect afterwards.

The Canadians have one more warmup game — tomorrow against Finland in Kitchener, Ont. — before opening the world junior hockey championship in Buffalo, N.Y., on Boxing Day against Russia, and there was plenty in their play to tighten up.

Max Friberg scored midway through the third period for Sweden, but Johansen picked up a loose puck in front of the net and fired it home at 15:55 to settle things down, and Cody Eakin put it away by scoring into an empty net with 46.1 seconds left.

A night after dismantling a soft Swiss squad 8-0 in Oshawa, Ont., the Canadians were put on their heels by the darting yellow jerseys of a Sweden team that answered every hit and didn't back down an inch.

The Swedes arrived in Toronto missing 10 bags of equipment, and only practised Monday after Hockey Canada sent them on a shopping spree for some replacement gear. But they got their stuff about three hours before gametime and found their legs immediately, using their speed to take away time and space from the Canadians.

Despite thundering hits early on from Schenn, Kassian and Marcus Foligno, it was Roy who kept Sweden from running away with it in the first with a series of big stops.

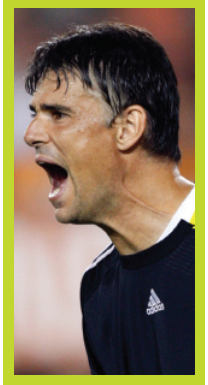
It took 6:11 for Canada to register its first shot of the game.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Team Canada forward Ryan Johansen jumps in the air as Team Sweden goalie Robin Lehner makes a save.

Quoted



"When I look back at the MLS stage of my career, I'm pretty proud of what I accomplished from the age of 35 on. I worked hard for that."

PAT ONSTAD, THE STAR CANADIAN GOALKEEPER WHO ANNOUNCED HE WAS RETIRING FROM THE HOUSTON DYNAMO AT THE AGE OF 42 TO BECOME AN ASSISTANT COACH WITH D.C. UNITED. HE LEAVES WITH THREE MLS CHAMPIONSHIPS AND TWO MLS GOALKEEPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS DESPITE NOT JOINING THE LEAGUE UNTIL HE WAS 35.

Scan code for more sports

Opinion

RORY BOYLEN
THE HOCKEY NEWS

CANUCKS NOT WELL REPRESENTED

If you're planning on watching the world junior championship simply to catch up with Vancouver Canucks prospects, you're not going to be seeing much hockey this holiday season.

That's because the Canucks don't have very many representatives at the annual event. Actually, to be precise, they have one player, a goalie, who may not play at all.

Jonathan Iilahti, the team's sixth-round pick (175th overall) from last summer's draft, is one of four goalies on Finland's roster. With 2009 Calgary draftee Joni Ortio on the roster, he's the favourite to take the reins. Iilahti will face competition from another 2010 late-rounder and a 2011 draft-eligible netminder, so we won't know who will get the nod until the tournament starts.

So what does that say about the state of Vancouver's prospect pool? Only that the NHL squad has focused its efforts on winning the Cup as soon as possible, rather than worrying about five years from now.

While the WJC can be a ground for draft-eligible players to stand out and move up the draft rankings, it's generally a tournament for 19-year-olds. So for a team that didn't pick in the first three rounds at the 2010 NHL draft, it can only be expected that they'd be under-represented.

First-rounder Jordan Schroeder, picked in 2009, isn't eligible and neither is 2008 pick Cody Hodgson. Three of Vancouver's other four picks from 2010 are North Americans and face a straight uphill battle when trying to crack the big-name Canadian and American rosters.

On top of Schroeder and Hodgson, the Canucks have intriguing prospects Bill Sweatt, Sergei Shirokov, Kevin Connauton and Eddie Lack, among others, playing on the American League team. The fact the Canucks have so few players at the WJC doesn't mean the cupboard is bare, it just means they took a year to build for the now.

And for a team in the position the Canucks are, that makes perfect sense. When the WJC rolls around again next season, Vancouver should be a little better represented. Although if they do end up with the 2011 Stanley Cup, they won't be picking very high at the draft.

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Philadelphia	35	22	8	2	3	117	87	49	12-6-0-2	10-2-2-1	7-2-0-1	L1
d-Washington	36	20	12	2	2	109	100	44	13-4-1-2	7-8-1-0	2-6-1-1	W2
d-Montreal	34	19	13	2	0	89	77	40	12-5-2-0	7-8-0-0	4-5-1-0	L2
Pittsburgh	34	22	10	2	0	110	79	46	11-6-1-0	11-4-1-0	8-2-0-0	W1
Atlanta	36	19	12	1	4	117	104	43	10-7-0-2	9-5-1-2	6-2-0-2	L1
Tampa Bay	33	19	10	2	2	104	109	42	10-2-1-1	9-8-1-1	7-1-0-2	W4
NY Rangers	35	20	14	1	0	105	91	41	8-8-1-0	12-6-0-0	6-4-0-0	L1
Boston	32	17	11	1	3	89	68	38	8-6-1-2	9-5-0-1	5-3-1-1	L1
Carolina	32	15	13	0	4	90	99	34	7-5-0-1	8-8-0-3	4-3-0-3	L1
Buffalo	34	14	16	4	0	89	97	32	8-9-1-0	6-7-3-0	5-4-1-0	W1
Ottawa	35	14	17	3	1	81	106	32	8-9-1-1	5-8-2-0	3-4-2-1	L2
Florida	31	15	16	0	0	85	78	30	7-6-0-0	8-10-0-0	5-5-0-0	W2
Toronto	33	12	17	2	2	75	102	28	8-7-2-1	4-10-0-1	4-6-0-0	L3
New Jersey	33	9	22	1	1	59	103	20	5-8-1-1	4-14-0-0	2-8-0-0	L3
NY Islanders	30	6	18	3	3	65	104	18	4-7-1-2	2-11-2-1	2-6-1-1	L1

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Dallas	34	21	10	1	2	100	92	45	12-3-1-1	9-7-0-1	6-2-1-1	W3
d-Detroit	32	20	8	3	1	105	88	44	12-4-2-1	8-4-1-0	4-4-2-0	L2
d-Vancouver	31	19	8	2	2	101	78	42	11-3-1-1	8-5-1-1	7-2-1-0	W4
Colorado	34	19	11	4	0	121	110	42	10-5-1-0	9-6-3-0	6-2-2-0	L1
San Jose	34	18	11	4	1	102	95	41	9-4-2-1	9-7-2-0	6-3-0-1	W3
Nashville	32	17	9	4	2	83	79	40	8-2-3-2	9-7-1-0	8-1-1-0	L1
Anaheim	38	18	16	2	2	98	111	40	11-6-0-1	7-10-2-1	5-4-0-1	L1
Los Angeles	32	19	12	1	0	95	75	39	11-2-1-0	8-10-0-0	6-3-1-0	W1
Chicago	35	18	14	2	1	111	103	39	10-9-0-0	8-5-2-1	6-3-1-0	W2
Phoenix	32	15	10	4	3	89	93	37	6-4-2-2	9-6-2-1	4-4-0-2	L1
Columbus	33	17	13	2	1	85	91	37	9-8-0-1	8-5-2-0	4-5-1-0	W1
St. Louis	33	16	12	2	3	86	93	37	10-4-0-2	6-8-2-1	4-4-1-1	W1
Minnesota	32	15	13	1	3	79	91	34	8-7-0-2	7-6-1-1	5-3-1-1	W2
Calgary	35	14	18	1	2	92	103	31	9-7-0-0	5-11-1-2	4-5-0-1	L3
Edmonton	32	12	15	1	4	85	110	29	6-8-1-1	6-7-1-2	6-3-0-1	L1

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Last night's results
Buffalo 5 Anaheim 2
St. Louis 4 Atlanta 2
Columbus 3 Calgary 1
Washington 5 New Jersey 1
Dallas 5 Montreal 2
Los Angeles 5 Colorado 0
San Jose 2 Edmonton 1

Monday's results
Vancouver 3 St. Louis 1
Atlanta 6 Toronto 3
Minnesota 4 Calgary 1
Anaheim 3 Boston 0
Florida 5 Philadelphia 0
Pittsburgh 6 Phoenix 1
Tampa Bay 5 Carolina 1

Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Islanders, 7 p.m.
Florida at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Vancouver at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Nashville at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.

SHARKS 2, OILERS 1

First Period
No Scoring.
Penalty — Stortini Edm (goaltender interference) 3:18.
Second Period
1. San Jose, Couture 18 (Clowe) 13:15
2. San Jose, Boyle 4 (Marleau, Thornton) 16:43 (pp)
Penalties — Gilbert Edm (holding) 0:26, Wallin SJ (interference) 7:19, Nichol SJ (hooking) 8:07, Hall Edm (holding) 9:25, Whitney Edm (holding stick) 14:48.
Third Period
3. Edmonton, Penner 11 (Whitney, Hall) 18:01
Penalties — None.
Shots

Edmonton	5	9	13	27
San Jose	5	17	8	30

Goal — Edmonton: Khabibulin (L,8-12-2); San Jose: Niittymaki (W,12-3-3). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Edmonton: 0-2; San Jose: 1-4.
Att. — 17,562 (17,562) at San Jose, Calif.

BLUE JACKETS 3, FLAMES 1

First Period
1. Columbus, Voracek 6 (Methot, Brassard) 5:14
Penalties — Jackman Cal, Boll Clb (fighting) 2:59, Regehr Cal, Sestito Clb (fighting), Stralman Clb (holding) 13:10, Iginla Cal (boarding) 13:59, Calgary bench (too many men; served by Jokinen) 18:23.
Second Period
2. Columbus, Boll 3 (Sestito, Wilson) 11:18
3. Calgary, Jokinen 7 (Iginla, Giordano) 16:34 (pp)
Penalties — Vermette Clb (interference) 6:46, Vermette Clb (interference) 16:01.
Third Period
4. Columbus, Klesla 2, 19:02 (en)
Penalties — Morrison Cal (tripping) 5:12, Columbus bench (too many men; served by Brassard) 15:20.
Shots

Calgary	9	11	10	30
Columbus	12	17	8	37

Goal — Calgary: Karlsson (L,2-2-2); Columbus: Garon (W,8-4-2). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Calgary: 1-4; Columbus: 0-3.
Att. — 12,443 (18,144) at Columbus, Ohio.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Crosby, Pgh	27	30	57
Stamkos, TB	26	21	47
St. Louis, TB	13	30	43
Perry, Ana	17	22	39
Datsyuk, Det	12	27	39
D.Sedin, Vcr	16	22	38
B.Richards, Dal	15	23	38
Ovechkin, Wash	12	26	38
H.Sedin, Vcr	6	31	37
Getzlaf, Ana	13	22	35
Byfuglien, Atl	11	24	35
Sharp, Chi	18	16	34
Eriksson, Dal	14	20	34
Duchene, Col	13	21	34
Backstrom, Wash	11	23	34
Semin, Wash	18	15	33
E.Staal, Car	16	17	33
Roy, Buf	10	23	33
Zetterberg, Det	10	23	33
Toews, Chi	15	17	32
Kopitar, LA	14	18	32
P.Stastny, Col	13	19	32
M.Richards, Pha	11	21	32
Giroux, Pha	16	15	31
Heatley, SJ	14	17	31
Iginla, Cal	14	17	31
Ladd, Atl	12	19	31
Hejduk, Col	11	20	31

Not including last night's games

FOOTBALL

NCAA

BOWL GAMES

All times Eastern
Last night's result
BEEF 'O' BRADY'S BOWL
At St. Petersburg, Fla.
Louisville 31 Southern Mississippi 28
Tonight's game
MAACO BOWL
At Las Vegas
Utah (10-2) vs. Boise State (11-1), 8 p.m.
Tomorrow's game
POINSETTIA BOWL
At San Diego, Calif.
San Diego State (8-4) vs. Navy (8-3), 8 p.m.
Friday's game
HAWAII BOWL
At Honolulu
Hawaii (10-3) vs. Tulsa (9-3), 8 p.m.
Sunday's game
LITTLE CAESARS PIZZA BOWL
At Detroit
Toledo (8-4) vs. Florida International (6-6), 8:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 27
INDEPENDENCE BOWL
At Shreveport, La.
Georgia Tech (6-6) vs. Air Force (8-4), 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 28
CHAMPS SPORTS BOWL
At Orlando, Fla.
North Carolina State (8-4) vs. West Virginia (9-3), 6:30 p.m.
INSIGHT BOWL
At Tempe, Ariz.
Missouri (10-2) vs. Iowa (7-5), 10 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 29
MILITARY BOWL
At Landover, Md.
East Carolina (6-6) vs. Maryland (8-4), 2:30 p.m.
TEXAS BOWL
At Houston
Baylor (7-5) vs. Illinois (6-6), 6 p.m.
ALAMO BOWL
At San Antonio
Arizona (7-5) vs. Oklahoma State (10-2), 9 p.m.

SOCCER

SCOTLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Yesterday's results
Celtic 1 Kilmarnock 1
Dundee United vs. Rangers (ppd., snow)

SPAIN

COPA DEL REY

Round of 16
First Leg
Yesterday's results
Barcelona 0, Athletic Bilbao 0
Cordoba 1, Deportivo La Coruna 1
Valencia 0, Villarreal 0

FRANCE

LIGUE 1

Yesterday's result
Lorient 0 Montpellier 0

GERMANY

GERMAN CUP

Round of 16
Yesterday's results
Augsburg 0, Schalke 1
Hoffenheim 2, Borussia Moenchengladbach 0
Kickers Offenbach vs. Nuremberg (ppd.)
Koblenz vs. Kaiserslautern (ppd.)

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Boston	22	4	.846	—
d-Miami	21	9	.700	3
d-Chicago	17	9	.654	5
Atlanta	18	12	.600	6
New York	16	12	.571	7
Orlando	16	12	.571	7
Indiana	13	14	.481	9½
Milwaukee	11	16	.407	11½
Philadelphia	11	17	.393	12
Toronto	10	18	.357	13
Charlotte	9	19	.321	14
Detroit	9	19	.321	14
New Jersey	9	20	.310	14½
Cleveland	8	20	.286	15
Washington	7	19	.269	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	24	3	.889	—
Dallas	23	5	.821	1½
d-L.A. Lakers	21	8	.724	4
d-Oklahoma City	20	9	.690	5
d-Utah	20	9	.690	5
Denver	16	10	.615	7½
New Orleans	16	12	.571	8½
Portland	15	14	.517	10
Phoenix	13	14	.481	11
Houston	13	15	.464	11½
Memphis	12	17	.414	13
Golden State	10	18	.357	14½
L.A. Clippers	8	21	.276	17
Minnesota	6	23	.207	19
Sacramento	5	21	.192	18½

d-division leader
Last night's results
Oklahoma City 99 Charlotte 81
Dallas 105 Orlando 99
Chicago 121 Philadelphia 76
New Jersey 101 Memphis 94
Golden State 117 Sacramento 109 (OT)
Milwaukee 98 L.A. Lakers 79
Monday's results
Atlanta 91 Orlando 81
Utah 101 Cleveland 90
Indiana 94 New Orleans 93
Washington 108 Charlotte 75
Dallas 98 Miami 96
San Antonio 118 Phoenix 110
Portland 106 Milwaukee 80
Houston 121 Golden State 112
L.A. Clippers 113 Minnesota 90
Tonight's games
Cleveland at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Detroit at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Washington, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Utah at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
New Jersey at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Denver at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Houston at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

SCORING AVERAGE

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Durant, OKC	24	213	196	658	27.4
Stoudemire, NYK	28	281	174	742	26.5
Bryant, LAL	28	246	191	724	25.9
Ellis, GOL	27	260	119	680	25.2
Nowitzki, DAL	27	252	141	670	24.8
Rose, CHI	24	224	93	584	24.3
James, MIA	30	244	203	729	24.3
Anthony, DEN	24	200	161	576	24.0
Gordon, LAC	27	210	185	645	23.9
Wade, MIA	29	236	183	682	23.5
Martin, HOU	28	185	220	655	23.4
Westbrook, OKC	28	217	203	646	23.1
Williams, UTA	29	214	171	646	22.3
Howard, ORL	25	188	163	539	21.6
Bargnani, TOR	26	211	102	556	21.4
Granger, IND	26	191	111	553	21.3
Beasley, MIN	27	231	90	574	21.3
Gay, MEM	27	219	92	566	21.0
Love, MIN	29	204	157	603	20.8
Griffin, LAC	29	235	131	602	20.8
Scola, HOU	28	233	100	566	20.2
Gasol, LAL	28	214	125	553	19.8
Ginobili, SAN	27	164	140	531	19.7
West, NOR	27	209	100	519	19.2
Lopez, NJN	28	191	153	535	19.1
Aldridge, POR	29	219	112	553	19.1
J. Richardson, ORL	26	186	57	492	18.9
Pierce, BOS	26	167	116	480	18.5
Felton, NYK	28	185	95	516	18.4

Not including last night's games

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE
BOSTON RED SOX — Agreed to terms with RHP Bobby Jenks on a two-year contract. Designated INF Brent Dlugach for assignment.
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Agreed to terms with OF Travis Buck on a minor league contract.
LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Designated C Ryan Budde for assignment, who refused assignment and elected free agency.
OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Agreed to terms with RHP Rich Harden on a one-year contract.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with OF Corey Patterson, RHP Winston Abreu, C Ryan Budde, LHP Sean Henn, LHP Mike Hinckley and RHP Brian Stokes on minor league contracts.
NATIONAL LEAGUE
HOUSTON ASTROS — Named Jamie Garcia pitching coordinator, Ty Van Burkleo roving hitting instructor, Frank Renner strength and conditioning coordinator, Jamey Snodgrass medical coordinator, Travis Driskill pitching coach and Bryan Baca trainer for Lancaster (California), Joel Chimelis hitting coach, Dave Borkowski pitching coach and Grant Hufford trainer of Lexington (SAL), Mark Bailey hitting coach and Kevin Ortega trainer of Tri-City (NY-P), Omar Lopez manager, Josh Bonifay hitting coach, Rick Aponte pitching coach and Michael Rendon trainer of Greeneville (Appalachian), Ed Romero manager, Edgar Alfonzo hitting coach and Charley Taylor pitching coach of the Astros (GCL), and Jose Martinez pitching coach, Joel Santos assistant pitching coach, Juan Zapata outfield coach, Johan Maya infield coach, Sixto Ortega catching coach, Ambiorix Reyes trainer and Edwin Garcia assistant trainer of the Astros (Dominican).
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Acquired C Rob Johnson from Seattle for a player to be named or cash considerations.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

GARY SOUTHSHORE RAILCATS — Signed OF Adam Klein and OF Cody McMorris.
SIOUX CITY EXPLORERS — Released OF Jacob Cruz. Acquired OF Josh Flores from Joliet (Northern) to complete an earlier trade.
WINNIPEG GOLDEYES — Signed INF Price Kendall.

BASKETBALL

NBA

CHARLOTTE BOBCATS — Recalled G Sherron Collins from Maine (NBADL).
PHOENIX SUNS — Released C Earl Barron.

FOOTBALL

NFL

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Placed WR Terrell Owens on injured reserve.
DALLAS COWBOYS — Placed QB Tony Romo on injured reserve.
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed OL Dennis Landolt and K Fabrizio Scaccia to the practice squad.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed DE Pannel Egboh and CB Chris Hawkins to practice squad.

HOCKEY

NHL

ANAHEIM DUCKS — Recalled LW Josh Green from Syracuse (AHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Extended their agreement with Springfield (AHL) through the 2011-12 season.
LOS ANGELES KINGS — Activated LW Marco Sturm from the non-roster injured list.
NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Placed G Rick DiPietro and D Mike Mottau on injured reserve.
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Recalled F Johan Harju from Norfolk (AHL).

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	12	2	0	.857	446	303
N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	.714	295	259
Miami	7	7	0	.500	239	261
Buffalo	4	10	0	.286	273	353
SOUTH						
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	381	342
Jacksonville	8	6	0	.571	319	365
Tennessee	6	8	0	.429	322	282
Houston	5	9	0	.357	333	386
NORTH						
x-Pittsburgh	10	4	0	.714	307	220
Baltimore	10	4	0	.714	324	253
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	252	271
Cincinnati	3	11	0	.214	281	362
WEST						
Kansas City	9	5	0	.643	322	281
San Diego	8	6	0	.571	388	260
Oakland	7	7	0	.500	353	330
Denver	3	11	0	.214	292	415

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	10	4	0	.714	412	339
N.Y. Giants	9	5	0	.643	360	288
Washington	5	9	0	.357	268	343
Dallas	5	9	0	.357	354	396
SOUTH						
x-Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	369	261
New Orleans	10	4	0	.714	354	270
Tampa Bay	8	6	0	.571	280	290
Carolina	2	12	0	.143	183	350
NORTH						
Chicago	10	4	0	.714	293	242
Green Bay	8	6	0	.571	333	220
Minnesota	5	9	0	.357	244	314
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	308	329
WEST						
St. Louis	6	8	0	.429	258	295
Seattle	6	8	0	.429	279	363
San Francisco	5	9	0	.357	250	314
Arizona	4	10	0	.286	255	370

x — clinched playoff berth.

WEEK 15

Monday's result
Chicago 40 Minnesota 14
Sunday's results
Atlanta 34 Seattle 18
Baltimore 30 New Orleans 24
Buffalo 17 Miami 14
Carolina 19 Arizona 12
Cincinnati 19 Cleveland 17
Dallas 33 Washington 30
Detroit 23 Tampa Bay 20 (OT)
Indianapolis 34 Jacksonville 24
Kansas City 27 St. Louis 13
New England 31 Green Bay 27
N.Y. Jets 22 Pittsburgh 17
Oakland 39 Denver 23
Philadelphia 38 N.Y. Giants 31
Tennessee 31 Houston 17

WEEK 16

Tonmorrow's game
(All times Eastern)
Carolina at Pittsburgh, 8:20 p.m.
Saturday's game
Dallas at Arizona, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday's games
Tennessee at Kansas City, 1 p.m.
San Francisco at St. Louis, 1 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Chicago, 1 p.m.
Baltimore at Cleveland, 1 p.m.
New England at Buffalo, 1 p.m.
Detroit at Miami, 1 p.m.
Washington at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Oakland, 4:05 p.m.
Houston at Denver, 4:05 p.m.
San Diego at Cincinnati, 4:05 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Green Bay, 4:15 p.m.
Seattle at Tampa Bay, 4:15 p.m.
Minnesota at Philadelphia, 8:20 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 27
New Orleans at Atlanta, 8:30 p.m.

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By comparison

Hyundai Tucson
Base price: $22,800
Sharp-looking second-generation model has become a popular choice.

Jeep Compass
Base price: $17,200
A low price is this small ute's primary appeal. For on-road use only.

WHEELBASE MEDIA

A diet makes you look sporty, even if there's no more muscle

▶ The RVR is 37 centimetres shorter than the standard Outlander. It's definitely a sporty little number, despite what its 143-horsepower four-cylinder engine implies.

This SUV should earn a spot in the big leagues

MALCOLM GUNN
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA
WHEELBASE MEDIA

It's not every day that Mitsubishi introduces new models to North America, but it had to happen sooner or later.

Technically, though, the 2011 RVR (called the Outlander Sport in the U.S.) is a spin-off of the current Outlander wagon. In fact, both models use the same platform as the compact Lancer sedan. But with a 37-centimetre reduction in overall length over the Outlander, the RVR actually appears radically different. It's also geared to a different audience and seems destined to fulfill a different mission in life.

Without doubt, the RVR's attractively proportioned shape appears, well, sporty, as opposed to the sheetmetal on the family-values-looking Outlander. In fact, only the senior Outlander's outside mirrors are shared with the upstart. From stem to stern, the design is more cohesive and works well with the Lancer Evolution-style open-mouth nosepiece that Mitsubishi claims was inspired by jet-fighter air intakes.

Naturally, a price must be paid for pruning more than a foot from the RVR's length. The bigger Outlander is available with a third row and the RVR is not. Simple.

Although the cargo hold has been similarly shortened, it remains more than adequate.

If need be, the storage space can be maxed out by folding forward the split 60:40 rear seat.

The five-passenger seating arrangement will suit most needs although we wonder about the polka-dot-like base seat coverings. For drivers, a display screen indicating fuel, outside temperature, odometer reading and other vitals separates the dashboard's large twin gauge pods.

The RVR's thrust is provided by the Lancer-based 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine that makes 148 horsepower and 145 pound-feet of torque.

That's not exactly earth-shattering compared to the Hyundai Tucson's 175-horsepower engine or the Volkswagen Tiguan's 200 turbocharged horses, but it should be enough to make the 1,410-kilogram RVR (about 180 kilograms lighter than the original Outlander) perform in a lively manner.

The RVR's performance might not entirely live up to its sporty intentions (Mitsubishi has more potent four-cylinder engines that it could easily draw upon), but for style and content, this shrink-wrapped wagon should earn a spot in the big leagues.

Mitsubishi RVR

What you should know about the 2011 Mitsubishi RVR:

- **Type:** Four-door compact front- /four-wheel-drive sport utility vehicle.
- **Engine (hp):** 2.0-litre DOHC four-cylinder (148).
- **Transmissions:** Five-speed manual; continuously variable (opt.)
- **Stats:** L/100 km (city/hwy) 8.7/6.4 (MT)
- **Base price:** $23,450 (Including destination).

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Jeep Grand Cherokee Overland shown.§

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2010 Jeep Patriot Limited shown.§

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SIRIUS SATELLITE RADIO

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MICRO-VANS READY TO KICK SOME BUTT

Auto Pilot

MIKE GOETZ
DRIVE@METROEWS.CA

The minivan gets no respect. It is the Rodney Dangerfield of vehicles, as in ... "When I was born I was so ugly the doctor slapped my mother."

Minivans were never cool, even in the '80s and '90s, when they ruled the land, because baby boomers began to breed like rabbits, and needed some wheels to take their offspring to organized activities.

As soon as there were cooler looking people-mover alternatives — first SUVs, then crossovers — minivan sales tanked. Adding to the slide were baby boomers moving out of their family-raising years.

Many major automakers don't even offer a minivan anymore (Chevrolet, Ford, Hyundai, etc.). But a new chapter has just opened for the minivan and it looks exciting. Okay maybe not bungee-jumping exciting — but interesting at least. They're calling them micro-vans but they're not really that "micro." I guess this is just to signify they are smaller than "regular" minivans.

All of them feature three rows of seating, sliding rear doors, and are based on C-segment vehicles, which are compacts like Mazda3, Ford Focus and Chevrolet Cruze.

For a time, Mazda5 was the only micro-van in our market. The Kia Rondo joined the festivities, though its low, low profile didn't add much notoriety to the segment.

▶ Say hello to the Ford Grand C-Max.

But now there is lots of micro-van action.

Not only is there an all-new 2012 Mazda5 coming early in the new year, but also both Ford and Chevrolet will jump into the segment during 2011.

The Ford C-Max will be the first vehicle in this market to offer the automaker's new 1.6-litre EcoBoost four-cylinder engine, which features both turbocharging and direct injection. Ford suggests an EcoBoost-equipped C-Max will deliver the best highway fuel economy of any seven-seat vehicle in the market.

Chevrolet's upcoming micro-van, the Orlando, debuts first in Europe then arrives in Canada by summer.

The Orlando will not be available in the U.S, which speaks volumes about how GM recognizes our tendency toward practicality and good sense — something Canadians should take pride in.

Micro-vans give you a lot of vehicle for their footprint. They also appeal to a wide demographic — empty nesters, dog owners, active-lifestyle types, families on a budget, and to a growing number of buyers of any stripe who need a bit of room but recognize that one doesn't always have to super-size.

Mazda Canada was in fact, very conscious of not making its new Mazda5 bigger than the last one. "We resisted that temptation, because the concept works beautifully as it is," says Greg Young, Mazda Canada's PR director.

Young adds that Mazda welcomes the competition: "For a long while it was just us talking about the merits of a six-passenger compact van, now lots of people will."

Looking for safety, security and space?

SECOND GEAR

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA

Recognized as a world-leader in occupant protection, models from the Volvo brand are often sought out by shoppers prioritizing safety on the move.

Safety is serious business for the Swedes, and a Volvo wagon's always been a sure way to get the wife and kids around with plenty of peace of mind.

The second-generation Volvo V70 was a wagon available to Canadian shoppers from 2001 to 2007 model years inclusive. A more rugged "Cross Country" variant of the V70, called the XC70, was also available.

Where confident all-season family travels are concerned, these two machines really hit the mark.

All models got five-cylinder power from a range of naturally-aspirated and turbocharged engines outputting between 168 and 247 ponies.

Manual or automatic transmissions were available, as was All Wheel Drive (AWD), depending on the model in question. Ultimately, the V70, XC70 and even S60 sedan in this generation shared virtually the same hardware under their skin.

Inside, look for flexible interior space, a generous cargo hold and plenty of storage to keep occupants organized. Volvo wagons are known for a solid, quiet ride and bolted-down feel of security and plantedness, and this generation is no exception.

The 4-1-1

- **Model:** 2001 to 2007 Volvo V70/XC70
- **Vehicle Type:** Wagon/crossover wagon
- **Approximate used price range:** $6,000 to $18,000

What Owners Like

Comfort, handling and security are all highly rated by owners, as is interior space, design, and drivetrain refinement.

What Owners Hate

Some owners report that careful and light-footed driving is required to achieve good mileage. Owners of models with the lower-output powerplants typically wish for more performance.

Common Issues

Considering a used Volvo wagon in this generation? Think "transmission". Numerous owners have reported gearbox issues that have required replacement, sometimes more than once. This well-documented problem means ensuring proper transmission integrity is vital to a successful purchase.

The Verdict

To the majority of V70s and XC70 owners, the driving experience and confidence more than compensate for potential issues.

All said, used shoppers should shop patiently and carefully, get service records and look for a model that's familiar to their local Volvo dealer. Be sure to snatch up any extended powertrain warranties that may be available. Just to be safe.

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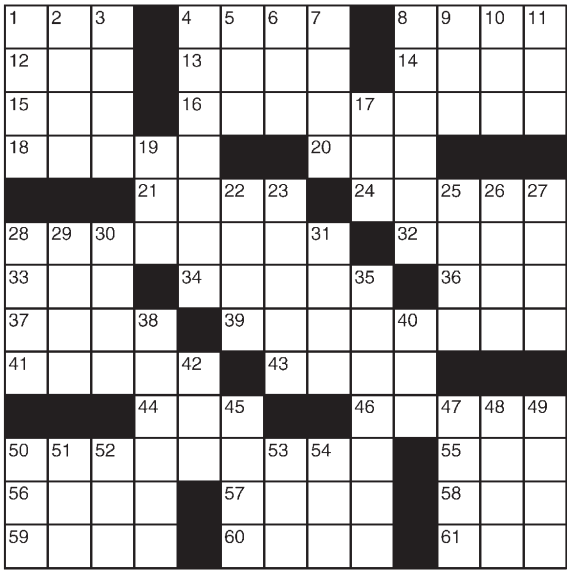
Crossword



Across

1 Request
4 Movie pig
8 Interoffice note
12 Writer Buscaglia
13 In due time
14 Ahmadinejad's land
15 Coffee vessel
16 Runner
18 Source of igneous rock
20 Spotted
21 Spheres
24 Parade
28 Confirm
32 Harvard rival
33 — carte
34 Baghdad resident
36 Sailor
37 Hard work
39 Flood
41 Rio Grande feeder
43 Casino cubes
44 Poolroom tool
46 Robbery
50 Convert to cash
55 "— Town"
56 Burden
57 Grand tale
58 Pugilists' org.
59 Summertime pest
60 Bottle part
61 Cleopatra's slayer

Down

1 Astringent
2 Antitoxins
3 "King —"
4 Rival of Captain Morgan
5 Santa —
6 "— voyage!"
7 Concludes
8 Carnival area
9 Historic period
10 Wrestling surface
11 Inseparable
17 "— the Walrus"
19 Miss Piggy's pronoun
22 Adriatic Sea port
23 Leave one's seat
25 Sitar music
26 Coagulate
27 "... oh, where can —?"
28 Seductress
29 Burn remedy
30 Secular
31 Iso-
35 Restrained
38 Grasshopper's cousin
40 Cee follower
42 — generis
45 Paradise
47 Corn Belt state
48 Second-stringers
49 Snare
50 Journal
51 Hostel
52 Sine-non link
53 Mimic
54 Twitch

▶ Yesterday's answer

C	R	A	B	■	D	E	A	R	■	T	W	A
M	O	N	O	■	O	G	R	E	■	W	I	G
T	W	I	N	P	E	A	K	S	■	O	N	E
■	■	■	B	A	R	D	■	T	U	S	K	S
D	E	P	O	T	■	■	F	A	M	E	■	■
I	R	A	N	■	S	T	A	R	W	A	R	S
P	S	I	■	L	E	A	S	T	■	T	A	I
S	E	R	G	E	A	N	T	■	C	E	N	T
■	■	E	L	A	N	■	■	F	O	R	T	E
A	D	D	O	N	■	B	A	U	M	■	■	■
L	E	O	■	D	O	U	B	L	E	B	E	D
O	A	F	■	E	D	G	E	■	L	I	L	Y
E	L	F	■	R	E	S	T	■	Y	O	K	E

Sudoku

2		7	6		5	4		9
		3				7		
4	1						6	3
			5		2			
	6						5	
			8		1			
9	7						2	1
		4				8		
8		2	7		6	9		4

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

3	2	8	9	6	4	1	7	5
1	4	7	2	5	3	8	9	6
9	6	5	7	8	1	4	2	3
8	3	2	4	7	9	6	5	1
6	5	1	3	2	8	7	4	9
4	7	9	6	1	5	3	8	2
5	8	3	1	4	2	9	6	7
7	1	4	5	9	6	2	3	8
2	9	6	8	3	7	5	1	4

Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

Happy Birthday Steve!!! I hope you have a great day! Hopefully this year will be full of luck and happiness! I love you very much, (gach la). Will you marry me? **KRISTEN XOXO**

My Bella, In you I have found the love of my life. My heart skips a beat when you're near, and I am nothing but thankful for having you to share with. Looking forward to a wonderful future with you. Truly, madly, deeply, **CHRIS**

L.L. My darling, wanted to remind you how much I care for you, how happy I am to have you in my life, and that I look forward to every passing day with you. Loving you endlessly, **R.B.**

Dear Kimmy, Ever since I first laid my eyes upon you, I have been living on cloud nine. I can't wait to wake up every morning next to you for the rest of my life. Love, **KARL.**

Today 8°/5° Showers 40%
Thursday 7°/6° Rain 100%
The Weather Network Download WeatherEye to your smartphone.
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Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 Are the conclusions you have reached about a certain situation your own conclusions, or are they ideas you have picked up from other people or from the media? Think for yourself today.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 You may be tempted to do something that will gain you an advantage over your rivals, but is it ethical? If not you are strongly advised to play by the rules.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Just because the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence does not mean you have been moving in the wrong direction. All roads eventually lead to where you most need to go.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 An idea or belief you have always taken for granted is beginning to show signs of wear and tear. Maybe it's time to replace it with something a bit more up to date.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 A relationship is at a turning point and what happens today or tomorrow will seal its fate one way or the other. It may not be easy to call it a day but if that's what your heart tells you then what choice do you have?

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Mercury, your ruler, is at right angles to Jupiter today, which means you will need to make an extra effort to get your message across. Make sure you shout at the right people.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 History always repeats itself, so if what you see or hear reminds you of the past make sure you act on that knowledge.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 Your trust in someone has taken a bit of a nose-dive in recent weeks and what happens today is unlikely to change your opinion that they don't know what they are doing. Keep your distance. Stupidity can be contagious.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 Take what you hear from a colleague or friend with a large pinch of salt. Mind planet Mercury, at odds with your ruler Jupiter, warns they don't know what they are talking about.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Take the chance to go back and take care of something you should have dealt with a long time ago. If you still can't get it right then maybe it's just too much for you. Do something else.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 You may be at a loss to explain why a friend or relative is acting so strangely but you know how illogical some people can be. Not everyone shares your ability to focus only on facts.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Hopefully you know how to keep a secret, because if you go blabbing about a friend's peccadilloes it will be you who ends up looking bad.

SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

MARKUS SCHREIBER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WIN!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image to the right and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

CHRISTOPHE ENA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, FILE)

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